

TRAINING, QUALIFICATIONS, AND CERTIFICATION

FIRE MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Introduction:

Modern fire management is a highly technical and professional operation requiring skilled, knowledgeable employees to meet National Park Service program objectives. Individuals will not be assigned to duties for which they lack training and/or certified experience. Additionally, ALL NPS employees assigned dedicated fire program management responsibilities at the park, regional, or national level shall meet established interagency and NPS competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) and concomitant qualifications.

Departmental policy requires that all personnel engaged in suppression and prescribed fire duties meet the standards set by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). The National Park Service wildland fire qualification system meets or exceeds all NWCG standards. All employees dispatched or assigned to wildland or prescribed fires will be qualified unless assigned as trainees.

Management at all National Park Service levels should recognize that employees trained and experienced in fire management possess skills, which uniquely contribute to quality performance in other job areas. These employees receive extensive supervision and management training as part of the wildland fire curriculum. Those skills are equally applicable to management of other types of emergency incidents, and to routine supervisory and managerial duties (e.g. maintenance, interpretive, administrative, resource management, and protection positions among others). Simply stated, the benefits accrued by developing these skills are well worth the investments of time and fiscal resources.

Objectives:

The following objectives are established for the NPS wildland fire management training program:

1. Promote safe and effective individual job performance through appropriate training in support of National Park Service fire management activities.
2. Provide effective technical, administrative, and logistical support training.
3. Provide and manage an effective instructor tracking system.

4. Cooperate and coordinate with the interagency wildland fire management community to achieve mutual training objectives.
5. Where possible, training offered by other sources will be incorporated into the fire curricula.

Program Administration:

National Park Service wildland fire management training is based upon criteria specified within the training curriculum approved by NWCG. This curriculum is supportive of positions described within [NWCG 310-1](http://fire.r9.fws.gov/fm/pms/docs/docs.htm) (<http://fire.r9.fws.gov/fm/pms/docs/docs.htm>), Wildland Fire Qualification Guide, and NWCG Prescribed Fire Job Qualification Guide. Position performance requirements are outlined in NWCG 330-1, Incident Command System Wildland Fire Job Performance Guide.

Additional fire management training, which is deemed necessary to improve employee proficiency but is not yet addressed within the NWCG curriculum, will generally continue to be developed at the geographic area or national level. This training often addresses an agency-specific need or is targeted toward the development of skills for positions, which have not yet been adopted by NWCG.

Training need analyses are developed each year at the park level. The assessment process provides the information needed to determine which courses will be required, which employees will attend them, and how many slots will be available. Courses identified should be based upon position needs and reflect goals established in individual employee developments.

The foundation for all lower-level training is the park, with course management directed by the park's fire management officer. Parks with a significant history of wildland fire should maintain a sufficient number of individuals, qualified at the appropriate level, to meet the park's wildland fire needs.

Generally, the park is responsible for sponsoring 100 and 200 level training courses. It is highly recommended that all training, regardless of level, be presented by interagency instructors and to interagency audiences.

Intermediate level 300 and 400 level training needs and course presentation can be determined at either the park or regional level. NPS personnel needing intermediate level training will be identified at region to help insure that these individuals receive the needed training. Each year regions will develop a FIREPRO training budget request based on these identified training needs.

National level 500 and 600 level training classes are prioritized by regions and submitted to the Fire Management Program Center for incorporation in to a national list. The exception to this is applications for 520 and 620. Applications for these classes are submitted to and are prioritized

by the appropriate geographic area coordination group.

Fire Management Curriculum:

The curriculum supporting fire management qualifications and position certification is explained in detail in the National Park Service's guide to the wildland fire qualifications system. Details relating to course descriptions and trainee/instructor qualifications are provided in the Field Manager's Course Guide available from the Publications Management System at the National Interagency Fire Center.

Training Development:

Needs for the development of new training or the revision of existing materials should be routed to regional fire management officers. National Park Service development needs are prioritized by regional fire management officers and the Fire Management Program Center.

Training Nomination Process:

Employees, both fire and non-fire, identified for national level training will be nominated for such training by their respective regional fire management officer; nominations will be forwarded to the Fire Management Program Center in priority order. The Center will then establish national priorities.

Regional nominations should be consistent with regional or geographic area direction. Such consistency should be indicated on the nomination in order to assist the Center in establishing national priorities. This process ensures both regional and national training/overhead development objectives are met, and provides a means for the nationwide tracking of qualified people.

Nominations for intermediate level courses should be routed to regional fire management officers for prioritization. Each region should develop written guidelines clarifying this process for that region.

Generally, the Interagency Training Nomination (NWCG) form ([Exhibit 1](#)) should be utilized for nominating employees to all levels of wildland fire training.

Fire Management Instructor Program:

Each region is responsible for the selection, training, and certification of an adequate number of Service instructors for fire management training.

Higher complexity level courses generally involve significant travel costs, making it prudent to require formal instructor training to assure quality training for employees. Instructors

participating in 200 level training should attend an instructor course of at least 32 hours that emphasizes adult education skills. The Facilitative Instructor and FLETC Instructor courses are representative of adult education programs meeting this requirement.

Lead instructors for 200 level training courses and all instructors of 300 level and above courses are required to have instructor training. Interpretive or teaching experience are valuable assets but are not a substitute for the adult education skills required of fire management instructors.

The Service identifies wildland fire instructor training skills by two levels of performance: lead instructor and unit instructor. Each level requires the completion of specific courses for certification.

Lead instructors must be able to instruct all units of the course and must be capable of last-minute substitution for another instructor. Generally, they must have satisfactorily served as unit instructors for the course in question. Lead instructors generally must be minimally position qualified at the next higher job level (e.g. a lead S-230 "Single Resource Boss-Crew" instructor must minimally be qualified as a Strike Team Leader-Crew).

Certification of instructors is the responsibility of lead instructors, not of managers or supervisors. However, regional fire management officers may occasionally designate and certify both levels of instructors based upon personal knowledge of skills and instructional abilities.

The Field Manager's Course Guide defines instructional responsibilities in the form of a checklist of duties for each of the three major roles involved in course presentation. The roles may be spread among several individuals or in some cases done by a single individual. The roles are:

Course Coordinator --the local manager hosting the training.

Lead Instructor -- the person responsible for total instructional content.

Instructor -- a person responsible for a unit of instruction.

The lead instructor must evaluate and certify the performance level of each instructor after each presentation. The course coordinator must evaluate the lead instructor, then forward all evaluations to the regional fire management officer within 30 days. Regional fire management officers will then enter the appropriate certification levels into the National Park Service Shared Applications Computer System in the Incident Qualifications and Certification System.

New employees with fire management instructional background should complete an "instructor cadre" questionnaire and forward it to their regional fire management officer for entry into the

Shared Applications Computer System.

Training Certification Process:

It is the responsibility of a course lead instructor to provide successful trainees with certificates of completion upon conclusion of the course. The instructor is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate training completion data is entered into the DOI Incident Qualifications Certification System.

If training is received from non-NPS sources, the park fire management officer is responsible for entering training completion data. For those parks who do not have access capability, the responsibility for entries reverts to the regional fire management officer.

Certain national level training courses (S590; I520/620) require entry of training completion by the Fire Management Program Center. Successful trainees should forward a copy of their certificates to the regional fire management officer for computerized entry by the Fire Management Program Center.

Training Materials:

FIREPRO parks will request funds for training materials in their annual FIREPRO requests, and regions will request funds for the instructors and training materials needed to support their non-FIREPRO parks.

All NWCG-approved training packages and course materials are readily available through the Publications Management System. NWCG [National Fire Equipment System Catalog Part 2: Publications](http://fire.r9.fws.gov/fm/pms/docs/docs.htm) (<http://fire.r9.fws.gov/fm/pms/docs/docs.htm>) identifies all materials and ordering procedures.

Training Funding:

Parks and regions request funds for training of NPS personnel in annual FIREPRO requests. This includes funding of instructor support for national and geographic area training. However, FIREPRO training funds are not to be used to pay overtime for students attending training, unless they are FIREPRO base-funded (e.g. ONPS funded employees will have overtime incurred in training paid out of ONPS funds). Such training overtime situations should be kept to an absolute minimum.

QUALIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION

Introduction:

The National Park Service is responsible for developing and maintaining employees who will

implement all aspects of the Service's wildland fire management program. The NPS utilizes the Incident Command System (ICS) qualification and certification standards, which outline minimum training, experience, and physical fitness requirements, to meet this goal. These standards are described in the NWCG's [Wildland Fire Qualifications Guide](http://fire.r9.fws.gov/fm/pms/docs/docs.htm), (<http://fire.r9.fws.gov/fm/pms/docs/docs.htm>) 310-1. The Service has included those standards in the DOI Incident Qualification and Certification System and has specified additional minimum qualifications for wildland fire positions not included in ICS.

Objectives:

The following program objectives are established to support and guide the DOI Incident Qualification and Certification System:

1. Monitor all employees' wildland fire management development (training, experience and physical fitness) to ensure accurate and timely compliance with National Park Service qualification and certification standards.
2. Monitor and direct the development of training and experience for key fire management personnel to meet identified staffing, incident management, and prescribed fire needs.
3. Establish and implement qualification standards for positions not currently addressed in NWCG standards with other cooperating agencies to the extent possible.
4. Provide day-to-day assistance and direction to field and regional offices in use of the qualifications system.
5. Manage the National Park Service fire management instructor master list to ensure that accurate records are maintained on qualified instructors for all system users.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The DOI Incident Qualifications and Certification System is a key application subsystem of the DOI Shared Applications Computer System. It provides the integrating mechanism for managing personnel resources for fire staffing development and in suppression and prescribed fire operational activities. The system provides the annual certification of employees for incident command system and prescribed fire jobs.

A key concept of the DOI Incident Qualifications and Certification System is that it is performance-based, i.e. based on the skills of the employee, rather than based on training. An individual may become performance-qualified for a position through a combination of experience and education. Conversely, the system allows for subjective evaluation by fire management staff of an employee's job performance competency. Even though technically qualified by the system, agency administrators, or their designate, may withhold a job

certification if the employee has demonstrated inadequate performance.

When a certified employee's performance of fire management duties does not reflect full compliance with Servicewide policies, directives or guidelines or established standards of conduct, supervisors must take prompt and effective corrective action through training, counseling, suspension of certifications, or disciplinary action, as appropriate.

The National Park Service's Wildland Fire Qualification and Certification System Guide provides a detailed outline for operating this system at park, regional, and national levels. This guide is critical to understanding and properly using the computerized qualifications system.

The system is designed to be accessed by each park and appropriate regional office. These offices enter and modify required data for all employees involved in wildland fire management activities.

The park fire management officer is responsible for the entry and maintenance of all pertinent park employee data and for ensuring that employees are trained, qualified, and certified at the levels which meet preplanned needs for initial and extended attack and prescribed fire. All employees involved in fire management should be entered, unless qualified at or above the single resource boss level. All individual records will be updated on an annual basis consistent with their fire season. The park fire management officer is also responsible for the accuracy and approval of annual qualification (red) cards.

Regional fire management officers are responsible for monitoring the accuracy of field input, determining and addressing region-wide qualifications and training needs, and assisting those field units not having on-line access capability.

PHYSICAL FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

The qualification and certification requirements include a physical fitness component. Employees who are assigned wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire duties must be in adequate physical condition to safely fulfill their duties.

All National Park Service employees considered for firefighting duties will meet the accepted NWCG physical fitness test for the designated position. Those seasonal employees hired primarily for fire duties and those permanent employees with arduous duty fire assignments identified, as a primary duty in their position descriptions will be required to meet the three-year physical examination criteria. These requirements will apply equally to employees with wildland fire and prescribed fire duties. The NPS shall develop and support physical fitness programs that assist the employees in attaining and maintaining the necessary fitness standards.

Each park will determine the period for required annual physical fitness testing. This should be prior to the commencement of regular fire season. For those units having split fire seasons,

only one testing per year is required: for permanent employees, this should occur prior to the first season.

For seasonal employees: Each park, unless defined otherwise by a regional office, will determine how long a period will be allowed between first hire and physical fitness testing. It is suggested that this period not exceed two weeks, unless there are unusual acclimatization considerations (e.g. park is at 8,000 ft level, and new employees come from sea level).

See [Exhibit 2](#) for NPS protocols on implementing the NWCG physical fitness testing. As of 1/1/98, the NWCG-approved testing consists of the Work Capacity Test Series (Pack, Field, and Walk).

Pursuant to the authorities found in 5 U.S.C. 7901 (<http://www.law.cornell.edu>) and consistent with DO-57, Health and Fitness, personnel are authorized up to three hours per week as a directed work assignment to participate in activities designed to help maintain their required fitness level. These activities may include jogging, cross country skiing, cycling, walking, weight training, swimming, and other combinations of exercises that will assist in maintaining that level.

Those wildland firefighters whose fulltime duties are 100% arduous-duty related (such as helitack, hotshot, engine, prescribed fire, smokejumper crews) will normally be provided one hour per day for fitness training.

Participation in the program will be based on the provisions of a written agreement between the employee and his or her supervisor, which outlines the general objectives and expectations of the program and identifies the types and frequencies of exercise approved for the employee.

Description of the four fitness levels, as well as medical and physical fitness testing requirements and procedures are all outlined in the (<http://fire.r9.fws.gov/fm/pms/docs/docs.htm>) [NWCG 310-1 Wildland Fire Qualifications Subsystem Guide](#). All Service wildland fire personnel will strictly adhere to these requirements and procedures.